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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

April 28, 2010

The Honorable David E. Price
Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
B-307 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
2406 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Price and Ranking Member Rogers:

As your subcommittee prepares its Fiscal Year 2011 appropriations bill, please consider the following updated requests. In light of the recent murder of a rancher in my district, Americans living along the U.S.-Mexico border are facing growing insecurity.

Over the past three years, a raging drug war has led to the murders of an estimated 15,000 people. Drug cartels now fight each other – and Mexican military and law enforcement – with startling ferocity and sophisticated weapons and tactics for control over narcotics distribution, including significant networks inside the United States.

In order to protect the lives and lands of Americans, it is imperative that the remote area in the San Bernardino Valley has improved cell phone service. The federal government's failure to take responsible action to secure the U.S.-Mexico border is simply unacceptable. Border security is homeland security. A safe border helps make our whole nation more secure. As a result, I have amended my request to your Subcommittee by adding \$7 million for the construction of cell phone towers in this area. Please note that this request is now my first priority.

I have also enclosed photos of the stretch of the Nogales border fence for which I originally requested \$3 million in funding. These photos clearly show the desperate need to replace this patchwork fence which was originally built in 1994.

1. **Cell Phone Towers in the San Bernadino Valley - \$7,000,000:** East of Douglas, Arizona, lays the San Bernadino Valley, a sparsely populated portion of the border with rugged terrain and an ideal corridor for human and drug trafficking. On March 27, 2010, a well-respected rancher was murdered near the U.S.-Mexico border. Robert Krentz, whose family has ranched in the area for more than a century, was shot and killed on his ranch northeast of Douglas. Since this tragic event, I have met with local ranchers to get

their advice on what should be done to decrease the violence and prevent another death. They told us that one of the most important steps that must be taken is to improve electronic communication in the area which currently lacks cellular phone service. Insufficient population, harsh topography and equipment safety concerns have dissuaded wireless cellular phone providers from placing communications towers in the area. The dearth of communications technology has severely limited local residents' ability to effectively disseminate critical intelligence to local law enforcement and Border Patrol or contact emergency health services, greatly increasing security threats to area residents. In fact, the lack of reliable electronic communications contributed to a delay in the search for Mr. Krentz after he was reported missing and in the coordination of an immediate hunt for his killer who was able to escape in to Mexico. As a result, it is imperative that mobile reception towers are installed in and around the San Bernardino Valley in order to increase the safety of border residents and bolster critical law enforcement efforts against human and drug smuggling.

2. **Nogales Border Fence Enhancement and Replacement - \$3,000,000:** Adjacent to the Nogales Port of Entry, a corrugated metal barrier made of Landing Mats has stood between Mexico and the United States. It is regularly climbed over or cut through by people entering the U.S. illegally. Physical barriers have moved toward more sophisticated measures like Bollard-style fence systems which have been incorporated in other areas of Nogales. The Bollard-style fence is virtually impenetrable and also allows border patrol agents to see anyone who is approaching the fence to either climb it or to throw projectiles at the agents. This 2.9 mile stretch of fencing needs immediate replacement in order to ensure that smugglers can no longer circumvent the Port of Entry. This is a good use of taxpayer funds because it will hinder illegal border crossings and will provide better protection to the Border Patrol Agents who are guarding the border.

Programmatic Requests:

1. **Customs and Border Protection Agents - \$15,500,000:** This year's proposed Homeland Security budget includes a dangerous reduction of 181 Border Patrol Agents. CBP is solely responsible for protecting our nation's borders. The recent sharp increase in violence in the border region underscores the dangers faced by Agents in the field. The addition of more advanced technologies like SBInet has not proven successful and the need for more Customs and Border Protection agents has never been more prevalent. The funding reductions proposed for CBP agents undermine previous promises to grow the Border Patrol beyond 20,000 agents. This funding would restore the additional 181 planned positions.
2. **DHS Customs and Border Patrol Air and Marine Operations (CBP AMO) and USCG Maritime Predator B Systems - \$35,000,000:** Funding will provide immediate and key solution in detecting semi-submersible vehicles to support counter terrorism, narcotics and human trafficking. It will also provide increased and persistent distribution of intelligence and security. Predator B is a long endurance, high altitude, UAS used for ISR, search & rescue, disaster relief, & emergency response. Additional funding is needed to ensure operational requirements are met. It is a cost effective, immediate solution to protect our national borders, littorals, ports and transit zones.

- 3. Customs and Border Protection Officers (CBPO) - \$99,800,000:** U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) have the sole responsibility of protecting our nation's borders. As a single, unified border agency, CBP's mission is vitally important to the protection of America and the American people. CBP's priority mission is preventing terrorists and weapons from entering the United States, while also facilitating the flow of legitimate trade and travel. The recent sharp increase in violence in the border region along with increased wait times at ports of entry underscore the need for more Customs and Border Protection officers (CBPOs). The CBP FY2011 budget included a \$99.8 million rescission for construction funding. The budget also funds nearly 400 additional CBPOs, however the need is closer to 5,000 officers. This funding should be used to hire more officers to address our severe shortage in CBPOs, which will only be exacerbated when at least three new ports of entry become fully operational in the next few years.

Thank you for your consideration of my requests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. Giffords", is written over the printed name.

Gabrielle Giffords
Member of Congress



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